

Message Text

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SUBJ: IMCO LEGAL COMMITTEE: CHAIRMANSHIP

1. AT CLOSE 20TH SESSION IMCO LEGAL COMMITTEE SEPTEMBER 7 MAZLOV (USSR) ANNOUNCED HE WOULD BE STEPPING DOWN AS CHAIRMAN BEFORE 21ST SESSION, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 21-25. HE ADMITTED, WITH REGRET, THAT HIS DECISION LEFT LEGAL COMMITTEE AND IMCO AS A WHOLE WITH SOMETHING OF A PROBLEM, PARTICULARLY SINCE COMMITTEE HAS BEEN OPERATING WITHOUT VICE CHAIRMAN (LARS BROCK, NORWAY WAS LAST V-C) FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. IN VIEW THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, MAZLOV SAID HE WOULD DO ALL HE COULD TO SMOOTH PATH FOR HIS SUCCESSOR, IMPLYING THAT HE WOULD EVEN CHAIR JANUARY SESSION IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. MAZLOV EXPRESSED PRIDE OVER COMMITTEE'S ACHIEVEMENTS AND EMPHASIZED VALUE TO HIM OF FRIENDSHIPS DEVELOPED DURING HIS SIX-YEAR TENURE AS CHAIRMAN.

2. ALTHOUGH MAZLOV ASKED THAT LAUDATORY REMARKS BE KEPT TO A MINIMUM, FRANCE (DOUAY) WENT ON AT SOME LENGTH PRAISING MAZLOV'S QUALITIES AND ASKED THAT HE RECONSIDER DECISION TO LEAVE POST. UK REP (WHITAKER) ECHOED THIS SENTIMENT ON BEHALF OTHER DELS. MAZLOV SAID HE WAS FLATTERED AND WOULD SEE HOW THINGS WORKED OUT.

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3. AFTER MEETING ADJOURNED, US REP PRIVATELY EXPRESSED

TO MAZLOV USG'S DEEP APPRECIATION FOR HIS SERVICE TO IMCO AND, WHILE NOTING IT UNDERSTANDABLE HE MIGHT FEEL NEED FOR CHANGE, SAID HIS ANNOUNCED INTENTIONS CERTAIN TO PRODUCE REACTION OF SINCERE REGRET IN WASHINGTON. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY IMPRESSED BY THESE COMPLIMENTS.

4. COMMENT: THERE WAS NO TIME TO DISCUSS MAZLOV'S ANNOUNCEMENT AND QUESTION OF SUCCESSION WITH OTHER DELS FRIDAY EVENING. HOWEVER, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THERE IS NO OBVIOUS SUCCESSOR TO MAZLOV NOW PARTICIPATING IN COMMITTEE'S WORK. POSSIBLY, DOUAY AND WHITAKER MIGHT CONSIDER THEMSELVES CANDIDATES BUT IT UNLIKELY THEY COULD COMMAND SUFFICIENT RESPECT IN COMMITTEE TO SUCCEED MAZLOV. FACT IS, IT EASIER AT PRESENT TO RULE OUT PERSONALITIES THAN TO INDICATE SOLID PREFERENCES. ACCORDINGLY, US REP BELIEVES USG SHOULD MAKE STRONG EFFORT TO PERSUADE MAZLOV TO STAY ON AS CHAIRMAN AT LEAST THROUGH COMMITTEE'S 22ND SESSION TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 18-22. BY THAT TIME, PREPARATIONS FOR TWO DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCES (ON PASSENGER AND LUGGAGE LIABILITY AND WRECK REMOVAL, SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1974) SHOULD BE COMPLETED, WITH COMMITTEE IN A POSITION TO MOVE ON TO OTHER SUBJECTS. IN MEANTIME, INTERESTED AGENCIES IN USG CAN CONSIDER POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE QUALIFICATIONS. WE MUST EXPECT, HOWEVER, QUESTION OF MAZLOV'S SUCCESSOR TO BE RAISED BY OTHER GOVERNMENTS AT UPCOMING IMCO MEETINGS AND OTHERWISE AND SHOULD BE PREPARED TO EXPRESS AT LEAST TENTATIVE VIEWS AT FAIRLY EARLY DATE. BASSIN

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